Tonality Since 1950

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Edited by Felix Wörner,
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Introduction

Felix Wörner, Ullrich Scheideler, and Philip Rupprecht

To speak of tonality is less to point by ostensive definition to an object, than to engage in a language-game. The word catches at our most familiar musical experiences of pitch and harmony, and yet the concept evades univocal meaning.[1] Tovey's quip about tonality – "a thing which you can no more describe except by metaphors and comparisons than you can describe the taste of a peach"[2] – encapsulates its resistance to language. Whether or not tonality constitutes a sharply-defined category or merely a verbal sign for facets of music's time-bound arc, it remains central to the shared discourse of composers, performers, and listeners. As a concept, tonality appears perennially caught between the acoustical and the metaphysical, between sonic realities and mediating contingencies of culture. The difficulty, in a sense, is with tonality's very familiarity: behind the "second nature" of its conventional invariance, as Adorno observed, lie the sedimented layers of history.[3] It is through historical framing, likewise, that one begins to narrow down the conceptual field of view, by defining tonality, for example, as a type of "key-feeling" that succeeded earlier periods of modal polyphony; or (with greater precision of chronology) by recognizing a musical phenomenon that flourished between *circa* 1600 and *circa* 1910.[4] As our title makes clear, it is the chronological limits of such definitions that we deliberately challenge in *Tonality Since 1950*.

1 On meaning in definitions versus language-games, see Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, 3rd edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963), paragraphs 6–7.

2 Donald Francis Tovey, *A Musician Talks 1: The Integrity of Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), 47.

3 Theodor W. Adorno, "Musik, Sprache, und ihr Verhältnis im gegenwärtigen Komponieren" (1956), in Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978) 16:649–64 (650); trans. Susan H. Gillespie as "Music, Language, and Composition," in *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard D. Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 113–26.

4 For representative definitions along these lines, see, respectively George Dyson, "Tonality," *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 3rd ed., ed. H.C. Colles (New York: Macmillan, 1944), 5:356; and Brian Hyer, "Tonality," *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 25:583–94 (583). For fuller collation of definitions of tonality by French-, German-, and English-speaking authors, see Michael Beiche, "Tonalität," in *Terminologie der Musik im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1995), 412–33.

The volume brings together new essays by fifteen contributors covering a wide repertoire of concert music (and exemplars from the pop and rock genres, too) composed in Europe, America, and the former Soviet Union over the past half-century. Approaching the tonality question in very specific and perhaps unfamiliar historical terms, *Tonality Since 1950* serves as a companion and sequel to our earlier volume, *Tonality 1900–1950: Concept and Practice*.[5] Together, the two books map a full century of tonal practices, with contributions from a team of European and North-American scholars.[6] We are well aware of the historical revisionism inherent to such a project. While we are hardly the first to find that the historiography of twentieth-century music has ignored or marginalized *tonal* music, no new historical account has yet emerged.[7] For many readers, certain basic questions will immediately arise: Why study tonality in the twentieth century, a period that *followed* its heyday? Is the history of music since 1900 not better served by other familiar descriptors of pitch relations – post-tonal, atonal, twelve-tone, or serial?

Among composers of the past century, the sense of belatedness with regard to tonality is certainly undeniable. Looking back on eighteenth-century music, the French composer Gérard Grisey observed, not without envy and regret, that for Mozart "the tonal language was something unquestionably there, available, known, learned, mastered."[8] For many composers working in the past century, however, a sense of tonality's availability – of simply being *there* – has gone. "Earlier music," Alfred Schnittke remarked in the 1980s, was "a beautiful way of writing that has disappeared and will never come back; and in that sense it has a tragic feeling for me."[9] To György Ligeti, by the early 1990s, the belatedness of musical means was something still broader: "Both functional tonality and atonality have worn out, along with twelve-tone equal temperament."[10]

Throughout the last century, tonality has been understood as a lost object, the epitome of the unattainable, the bygone, the vanished. The case is by no means clear-cut, though, and not all composers have shared Schnittke's bleak view of tonality as a tragic *fait accompli*. Hans Werner Henze, in the early 1960s, saw an ongoing need for younger composers to study theories "of earlier centuries"; historical and technical continuities between old and new music were, he felt, underestim-

5 Felix Wörner, Ullrich Scheideler, and Philip Rupprecht, eds., *Tonality 1900–1950: Concept and Practice* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2012).

6 As an aid to readers, the Index below covers both the present volume and *Tonality 1900–1950*.

7 For a valuable discussion, see Frank Hentschel, "Formen neuer Tonalität in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 63 (2006): 67–93.

8 "Le langage tonal inquestionné était là, disponible, connu, appris, maîtrisé." Gérard Grisey, "Question de langage," in Grisey, *Écrits, ou L'invention de la musique spectrale*, ed. Guy Lelong with Anne-Marie Réby (Paris: Éditions MF, 2008), 185; our translation. Grisey's manuscript note is undated.

9 Cited in Allan Kozinn, "An Eclectic Mix, Through a Contemporary Prism," *New York Times* (22 May 1988), 23.

10 György Ligeti, "Rhapsodische Gedanken über Musik, besonders über meine eigenen Kompositionen" (1991), repr. in Ligeti, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Monika Lichtenfeld (Mainz: Schott, 2007), 2:123–35 (133): "Sowohl die funktionale Tonalität als auch die Atonalität haben sich abgenutzt, ebenso die gleichschwebende zwölftönige Temperatur." Our translation.

ated.[11] Other practitioners, while acknowledging the fact of tonality's loss, have sensed the possibility of its return. In 1970, Steve Reich predicted that "The pulse and the concept of clear tonal center will reemerge as basic sources of new music."[12] To many present-day observers, Reich's prediction would appear to have come true. For Ligeti, meanwhile, the way forward was to develop new types of intonation (and of tonality), drawing on non-European musics.[13] Even so, it is hard to forget Grisey's remarks on Mozart's tonality, for they signal feelings of historical belatedness that seem peculiarly twentieth-century. In the distance between Schnittke's dystopian pronouncement of tonality's irrevocable loss, and Reich's confident anticipation of its return, one glimpses the special historical complexity facing composers working since 1950.

There would be no need to assert continuities between twentieth-century tonal practices and those of earlier periods, were it not for the ubiquity of a received narrative. The story of a dramatic break with tonality – in the music of Arnold Schoenberg and his circle after about 1908 – and of its exhaustion and eventual demise, was firmly in place by mid-century. Among many tellings we might cite is this capsule version, published by an eminent music historian in 1960:

> The first half of the 20th century passed under the sign of violent antitheses. First there was revolutionary dissolution, followed by severe, tradition-oriented concentration; emphatic subjectivity, then dogged objectivity and studied collectivism. […] Melody, in the post-Impressionistic world, became a color patch, an exclamation, the smooth surface of its face ruined by the varicose veins of incessant chromaticism. Then there developed a desire for broad design, diatonicism, folk tunes in the old ecclesiastic modes, even pentatonic melodies, only to be succeeded by "rows." The tonal system, already showing ambiguities in *Tristan*, disintegrated, then the aimlessly floating harmonic clouds were blown away, and "atonality" was subjected to military discipline.[14]

The hectic plot turns within Paul Henry Lang's account trace a series of reactions to an initial revolution. A varied sequence of later stylistic and technical developments – folkish diatonicism, row composition, atonality – are understood to flow from the singular event of tonality's "disintegration." In Lang's florid metaphors, one catches a certain bewilderment in the face of music's rapid stylistic evolution, or else a gently teasing retort to the dogmatic polemics of 1950s new-music fashion (as in his later facetious reference to "the government of the *avant garde*").[15] There is also much to debate in Lang's narrative. His reliance on a breezily teleological view of music-historical process uncritically asserts influences and causal connections

11 See his comments on "[…] den alten Lehren der früheren Jahrhunderte" in Henze, "Über Kompositionslehre (1963)," in *Musik und Politik: Schriften und Gespräche 1955–1984*, ed. Jens Brockmeier (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1984), 91–92 (91).

12 "Some Optimistic Predictions (1970) about the Future of Music," repr. in Steve Reich, *Writings on Music: 1965–2000*, ed. Paul Hillier (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 51–52 (52).

13 See Ligeti, "Rhapsodische Gedanken," 133 and 134.

14 Paul Henry Lang, "Introduction," in *Problems of Modern Music: the Princeton Seminar in Advanced Musical Studies*, ed. Paul Henry Lang (New York: Norton, 1960), 7–16 (8–9). Aspects of the tonal-disintegration narrative may be found in most music-historical textbooks published after about 1930.

15 Lang, "Introduction," 12.

among an array of musical styles and techniques, synoptically catalogued. Readers seeking music-theoretic perspectives, meanwhile, might bristle at the confident grammatical singularity of Lang's clipped reference to "*the* tonal system," in the absence of any mention of writings by Schenker, Schoenberg, Kurth, or Hindemith. It is not difficult to identify, in Lang's figure of a "disintegrating" tonal system, the workings of historiographic cliché; in his version of the historical record, tonality's loss is the foundational myth of what is often called musical modernism.[16]

Half a century further on, we find it increasingly difficult to accept a history of twentieth-century musical stylistic metamorphoses tethered only to a story of tonality's purported collapse. In *Tonality Since 1950* – as in its predecessor – the conscious aim is to throw new emphasis on continuities with past practices, rather than sudden breaks. The date in the title of the current volume demarcates a period of multiple ongoing engagements with tonality over the past half-century, not the aftermath of some singular collapse. While chronological precision is crucial to the enterprise, we do not claim to provide anything approaching a comprehensive "history" of tonality in the post-1950 period, either as a conceptual category or a compositional practice. More modestly, we lay some groundwork in the form of a series of intersecting and overlapping case studies. The historical scope of our first volume encompassed composers born in the 1860s and 1870s (Satie, Vaughan Williams, Schoenberg) through the 1910s (Barber, Britten), with accompanying essays treating theoretical contexts from Schoenberg and Kurth to Hindemith and Cowell.[17] In *Tonality Since 1950*, the protagonists are no less eclectic a group, extending from (again) Hindemith (b. 1895) to Thomas Adès (b. 1971), by way of Hanns Eisler, George Rochberg, Luciano Berio, Morton Feldman, György Kurtág, Hans Werner Henze, Alfred Schnittke, Steve Reich, Hans Zender, Valentin Silvestrov, Helmut Lachenmann, Oliver Knussen, Wolfgang Rihm, Kaija Saariaho, and Georg Friedrich Haas. To these composers of so-called classical or "concert" music, moreover, we add a smaller but representative selection from the vast pop and rock traditions, moving historically from the Beatles ("Can't Buy Me Love," 1964) and Jimi Hendrix ("Hey Joe," 1966) to Soundgarden ("Black Hole Sun," 1994). All of these musicians have composed in ways we believe count meaningfully as "tonal," for all the conceptual difficulties noted earlier. The obvious diversity of tonal practices is something that will emerge more fully within individual chapters. A cursory overview of some broader historical, methodological, and epistemic motifs of the period, meanwhile, will set the scene for a whole circle of creation.

It is the inheritance of tonality from earlier music that most often provides a logical starting point for composers working since 1950.[18] The idea of a "common

16 Among recent critiques of the historiography of tonality's collapse, see Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Early Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 358–60; and J.P.E. Harper-Scott, *The Quilting Points of Musical Modernism: Revolution, Reaction, and William Walton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 175–77.

17 Others composers discussed in *Tonality 1900–1950* include Koechlin, Ravel, Prokofiev, Milhaud, Hindemith, Stürmer, Sessions, Harris, and Weill.

18 For thoughtful attention to this point, see Daniel Harrison, *Pieces of Tradition: An Analysis of Contemporary Tonal Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), Ch. 1.

practice" shared by composers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, advanced by Walter Piston in his influential textbook *Harmony* (first published in 1941), was essentially empirical.[19] Theory, for Piston, followed practice; his book catalogued norms of chordal vocabulary and usage, ultimately, as a stepping-stone to understanding "the individual harmonic practices of composers of all periods."[20] Newer music, while clearly "divergent" from the past, also presented continuities.[21] For most readers, however, the empirical side of Piston's project quickly settled into a more fixed entity: "the" common practice, as Daniel Harrison notes, became "a conceptual category" in its own right.[22]

The flourishing of tonality throughout the past twentieth century has increasingly undermined historically closed views of its demise. A post-1900 century of tonality, similarly, poses theoretic-conceptual challenges to the post-Pistonian argument of an idealized common practice. Where George Dyson's early-twentieth century *Grove* article speaks of Classical practice tonality as evolving from "modal polyphony,"[23] present-day theorists propose other stories. An "extended common practice" – spanning polyphonic structures of Western music from the Renaissance through the present – Dmitri Tymoczko argues, locates Baroque-Classical tonal norms at the intersection of "*two* separate common practices," contrapuntal and harmonic.[24] Twentieth-century tonality, on this view, is not different in kind from sixteenth-century precursors; both repertories involve techniques of "connecting harmonically significant chords by efficient voice leading."[25] With concepts of harmonic "distance" among triads center-stage, Richard Cohn traces a "double syntax" in nineteenth-century scores: "nonclassical principles exist in close proximity to other behaviors that are normal under classical diatonic tonality."[26] From Romantic-era triadic progressions in chromatic spaces, Cohn discerns a clear historical path to the six-tone (hexatonic) and eight-tone (octatonic) scalar and chordal formations prominent in Liszt and early twentieth-century composers (Debussy, Stravinsky).[27]

Discussions of common-practice, diatonic, or chromatic tonality among historians of music theory remain far from settled, and proponents of neo-Riemannian and transformation theories have until recently restricted their analytical work to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century repertories.[28] If a post-1950 perspective can

19 Walter Piston, "Introduction," in *Harmony* (New York: Norton, 1941), 1.

20 Piston, *Harmony*, 2.

21 "The experimental period of the early twentieth century will appear far less revolutionary when the lines of development from the practice of older composers become clearer by familiarity with the music." Piston, *Harmony*, 2.

22 Harrison, *Pieces of Tradition*, 6.

23 Dyson, "Tonality," *Grove's Dictionary*, 3rd edition, 5:356.

24 Dmitri Tymoczko, *A Geometry of Music: Harmony and Counterpoint in the Extended Common Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 213; emphasis in the original.

25 Tymoczko, *A Geometry of Music*, 224.

26 Richard Cohn, *Audacious Euphony: Chromaticism and the Triad's Second Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 11.

27 Cohn, *Audacious Euphony*, 207.

28 Notable exceptions to this Classical-Romantic bias come in the work of theorists of pop, rock,

contribute to ongoing and emergent conversation, then, it might do so first by drawing attention to the relatively unfamiliar triad and seventh-chord progressions favored by composers such as Eisler, Rochberg, Schnittke, and Adès, for whom even early-twentieth century practices represent an increasingly remote reference point. A second contribution – arguably more radical – is to recontextualize received ideas of a "classical" (i.e., art-music defined) common practice in relation to other no-less widely disseminated norms – those of pop and rock music. While both classical and pop/rock repertories share foundational syntactic norms of pitch hierarchy, centricity, and harmonic function, the details in other respects are strikingly divergent. The subdominant/plagal orientation so common within rock triadic progressions, for example, partly reflects guitar-based blues influences. To many musicians, post-1950, the phrase "common practice" might seem opaque – which practice are we talking about? Among a plurality of diverse practices, just who is speaking the *lingua franca*? Who stands at the center, who on the periphery?

In the post-1950 period, one encounters tonality as a leitmotif of the narrative of musical progress central to artistic modernism. It is under the sign of tonality's abandonment that the progress of "the new music" has often been proclaimed; the bolder pronouncements can make for strange reading at a safe historical distance. In a 1947 newspaper column, "Modernism today," the composer and critic Virgil Thomson enthusiastically observed that "today's adventurous young, believe me, are mostly atonal."[29] He restated the claim three years later, under the heading "Atonality Today," identifying twelve-tone "research and experiment" as "the main field of musical composition where progress is taking place."[30] In the rethinking of all music's parameters, Thomson observed, a Parisian avant-garde – René Leibowitz, Olivier Messiaen, and the young Pierre Boulez – were leading the way: "If the first problem in atonality is to avoid familiar tonal relations, its second is surely to avoid familiar metrical ones. Complete renewal of the musical language and not a mere abandonment of its decayed portions, still less a spicing up of spoiled material, let us remember, is the aim of the atonal group."[31] Similarly confident assertions of musical renewal abound in the mid-century; the frequency of their circulation in mainstream press outlets (as here) – as well as in specialist periodicals (*La Revue musicale* in Paris, *The Score* in London, *Die Reihe* in Cologne) – is a reminder of just how vast, suddenly, the distance between the new and the old ap-

jazz, and film music; and in the eclectic repertories studied in Tymoczko, *A Geometry of Tonal Music*, and Harrison, *Pieces of Tradition*. For neo-Riemannian and transformational perspectives, see respectively *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Riemannian Music Theories*, ed. Edward Gollin and Alexander Rehding (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), and Steven Rings, *Tonality and Transformation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

29 Virgil Thomson, "Modernism Today," *New York Herald Tribune* (Feb. 2, 1947); repr. in Thomson, *Music Chronicles: 1940–1954*, ed. Tim Page (New York: Library of America, 2014), 589–91 (589).

30 "Atonality Today (I)," *Herald Tribune* (Jan. 29, 1950), repr. in Thomson, *Music Chronicles*, 757–60 (757).

31 "Atonality Today (II)," *Herald Tribune* (Feb. 5, 1950), repr. in Thomson, *Music Chronicles*, 760–62 (761).

peared. For modernist or avant-garde musicians working with twelve-tone rows, the old was easily identified as tonal.

The rift between tonal practices, widely regarded as outdated, and a serial-led avant garde movement deepens significantly in the 1950s and 1960s. "No one could have foreseen the sudden upsurge in interest in dodecaphonic methods on the part of a new postwar generation," Aaron Copland reported in 1968.[32] Facets of the full complexity of the picture will emerge in the chapters to follow. In a more panoramic way, we note *en passant* the intensity of the zero-hour ethos of the immediate post-World War II years; the prominent position of the novel technological means of concrete and electronic music composed in studios in Paris, Cologne, Milan, or New York; and the prestige accorded the post-war "upsurge" of serialism at leading new music festivals such as the Darmstadt *Ferienkurse*. Tonality, in such a climate, was not much discussed by the more polemical guardians of "progress." Leading composers who did retain ties to bygone expressive idioms – even figures formerly considered progressives – risked a damaging loss of reputation. Such was the case for Hindemith, who had publicly denounced twelve-tone music for a lack of "higher tonal organization," and in whose scores of the 1950s triadic consonances were more prominent than ever.[33] A younger figure like Henze too, suffered "a kind of excommunication" by his own generation for the excessively Romantic gestures of his newer scores in the 1950s.[34]

Igor Stravinsky's turn towards twelve-tone techniques after *The Rake's Progress* (1951) was a widely noticed and, for many, highly symbolic "conversion."[35] The burgeoning interests of composers as varied as Copland, Barber, Shostakovich, and Britten, in personal accommodations with row-based composition, in the 1950s and 1960s could be understood, publicly, as further confirmation that tonality was a spent force, at least among composers with ambitions of keeping up, technically and stylistically. In the fraught politics of the Cold War, loosely-defined ideological clouds trailed perceptions of musical style: serial technique, in the West, could stand as the embodiment of an autonomous art, a symbol of freedom; or in the Soviet bloc, as proof-positive of decadent "formalism." The claim that serial – rather than tonally-oriented – composition dominated the post-war North American scene possibly overstates the ideological anxieties of the day; the workings of cultural prestige remain a topic of music-historical debate.[36] What does seem more clear-cut, though, is the palpable air of scandal attending the highly visible "defections"

32 Aaron Copland, "Preface to the Revised Edition," in *The New Music: 1900–1960*, rev. edition (New York: Norton, 1968), 12.

33 Paul Hindemith, *A Composer's World: Horizons and Limitations* (1952; repr. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1961), 140.

34 Henze, *Bohemian Fifths: An Autobiography*, trans. Stewart Spencer (London: Faber, 1998), 145. Henze's comment recalls the public walk-out by his colleagues Boulez, Stockhausen, and Nono, from the first performance of his *Nachtstücke und Arien* at its 1957 Donaueschingen premiere.

35 For the term "conversion," see e. g. Copland, in *The New Music*, 92.

36 See Joseph N. Straus, "The Myth of Serial 'Tyranny' in the 1950s and 1960s," *Musical Quarterly* 83 (1999): 301–43; and Anne C. Shreffler, "The Myth of Empirical Historiography: A Response to Joseph N. Straus," *Musical Quarterly* 84 (2000): 30–39.

of composers like George Rochberg or David Del Tredici from atonal to unabashedly tonal and triadic idioms, from the later 1960s on.[37]

To collapse the European and Anglo-American experiences of serial and tonal music in the mid- and later twentieth-century into any single narrative would be to overlook differences between geographically remote regions, and obvious contrasts in the timing of the major stylistic shifts. While one might recognize (with Reich) that "clear tonal centers" were already popular with American minimalists by the early 1970s, the debate surrounding "Neo-Tonalität" among German-speaking composers such as Manfred Trojahn and Detlev Müller-Siemens emerges a few years later.[38] For Wolfgang Rihm, whose own music revels in specific historical and inter-textual references, the talk about "new tonality" signaled a shallow concern with fashion: "The alternative today is not avant-garde/dissonance versus zeitgeist/consonance but (as always): strong versus weak, vibrant versus worn-out."[39] Rihm voices impatience with unthinking use of tonal harmonies: in his elaborately metaphorical terms, music's tonal materials (harmony) embody a corporeal urge toward "dissolution" balanced by the time-bound life force of rhythm.[40] The verbal discourses surrounding tonality, unsurprisingly, reflect the particularity of distinct national traditions. Views of a "tonal" 1970s decade will appear quite different according to one's viewing angle: a fusion of categories of harmony and timbre is crucial to the French *musique spectrale* discussion (with due awareness of Messiaen's concept of "color");[41] the meanings of tonality, for Soviet-era composers, appear more bound-up with elegiac historical resonances. And always there is the sheer range of ways in which a composer might construct tonal experiences for listeners – from the modally-based linear-harmonic trajectory of Riley's early *In C* (1964) to the bluesy F^7 drone of Luc Ferrari's *À la recherche du rhythme perdu* (1978) or the elaborately protracted cadences of Silvestrov's 1980s scores.

A multi-author collection affords complementary perspectives on a shared object of interest. In *Tonality Since 1950*, the conversation develops among scholars from both sides of the Atlantic, and focuses on composers from several countries of origin or professional activity: Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, the United States, and the former Soviet Union. Our analytic and historiographic methods are correspondingly eclectic. From this mingling of histories and outlooks, some unexpected correspondences and overlaps emerge, along

37 On this point, see Shreffler, "The Myth," 33.

38 On tonal allusion in works by Trojahn and Müller-Siemens, see Hentschel, "Formen neuer Tonalität," 71–75. The publication *Zur "Neuen Einfachheit" in der Musik*, ed. Otto Kolleritsch (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1981) signaled related discussions, though the term *neue Einfachheit* ("new simplicity") soon lost currency.

39 Wolfgang Rihm, "Tonalität?: Klischee – Umwertung – Versuch" (1985–86), repr. in Rihm, *Augesprochen: Schriften und Gespräche*, ed. Ulrich Mosch (Winterthur: Amadeus Verlag, 1997), 2 vols., 1:194–209 (209): "Die Alternative heißt aber heute nicht Avantgarde/Dissonanz gegen Zeitgeist/Konsonanz, sondern (wie immer): dicht gegen schwach, vibrierend gegen schlaff." Our translation.

40 See Rihm, "Neo-Tonalität?" (1984); repr. in Rihm, *Ausgesprochen*, 1:185–93 (190).

41 On Messiaen's wide-ranging legacy, see *Messiaen Perspectives 2: Techniques, Influence and Reception*, ed. Christopher Dingle and Robert Fallon (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

with a host of new questions. The book's fifteen essays are arranged in three thematic clusters, each one passing chronologically through the period since 1950. In the remainder of this introduction, we will briefly introduce the individual chapters.

* * *

Concepts and Contexts. What do we actually mean when we talk about tonality in music composed since 1950? Ulrich Mosch takes this blunt definitional question as a point of departure for his chapter, "Foundation or Mere Quotation? Conditions for Applying the Tonality Concept to Music after 1950." Mosch observes the role of music's time dimension in defining the relationships of pitches and chords with a defined center. Apart from the structure of individual chords, it is in surrounding contexts – the "before" and "after" of any event, both locally and globally – that analysts will discover the presence and force of tonality. From this perspective, Mosch explores tonal effects in works by four composers. In Helmut Lachenmann's *Allegro sostenuto* (1986–88) a single tonal chord is robbed of framing voice-leading; in Luciano Berio's *Sinfonia* (1968–69), the glimpsed tonality of the background-layer Mahler quotation lends continuity to the collage texture; in Wolfgang Rihm's *Astralis* (2001) and the fifth of Hans Zender's *Logos-Fragmente* (2006–07), arcs of harmonic tension are defined, respectively, within equal-tempered and microtonal tuning systems.

In "Total Tonality or Tonal Totality: a Compositional Issue in Music after 1945," Wolfgang Rathert takes Hindemith's opposition between "natural" and "historical" categories of tonality – influenced by the theories of Hans Kayser and Hermann Heiß – as a starting point for discussions of the tonal-systemic dimension in composers as diverse as Karlheinz Stockhausen, Luigi Nono, György Ligeti, and Leonard Bernstein. Among examples of "totality," Rathert counts the all-interval pitch series in Nono, the *Lydian Chromatic Concept* treatise of jazz musician George Russell, and the interplay of tunings in Ligeti's Violin Concerto. His chapter confirms the surprising degree to which tonality was in the air after 1945, whether through systematic exploration of the known tonal universe or bold transgression of its limits.

Joseph Auner's essay, "The Stopped Clock: Tape Loops, Synthesizers, and the Transfiguration of Harmony," considers the impact of new sound technologies on the development of tonality since World War II.[42] Citing a plethora of concert and popular music from the 1960s and 1970s through the present, Auner documents how two technologies – the tape loop and the voltage-controlled modular synthesizer – have caused musicians to reimagine tonal harmony. If "microphonic listening" (Gérard Grisey) reveals sound's internal dynamics, the static effects of tape delay systems, as in Terry Riley's *Mescalin Mix* (1963), create a kind of sonically expanded moment. Auner reveals philosophical connections between the acousmatic sound objects in Pierre Schaeffer's work and the "slow-motion" aesthetic of

42 Auner's chapter extends ideas introduced in his earlier essay "Weighing, Measuring, Embalming Tonality," in *Tonality 1900–1950*.

Steve Reich's early phase-shifting music. Citing music by Mario Davidovsky and Éliane Radigue, among others, he observes how composers using synthesizers for sound modulation have redefined even very familiar tonal objects, such as the triad.

Nicole Biamonte's chapter on "Pop/Rock Tonalities" considers how paradigms of so-called common-practice tonality might apply to analysis of pop and rock genres. Some "tonal" traits of the classical repertoire – centricity, tertian chord structures, and the interplay of structural and embellishing events – are also important to pop and rock, but in other specific ways, the individual genres diverge. Building on Walter Everett's 2004 taxonomy of tonal systems in rock, Biamonte proposes a modified scheme reflecting the relative prevalence of particular tonal-modal features in given genres. Biamonte's discussion synthesizes a wide range of recent analytic literature; her chapter concludes with brief readings of tonal detail in songs composed between the 1960s and the 1990s.

Perspectives of the Mid-Century. Under this heading, we present four chapters devoted to composers who came to prominence in Germany and in the US during the 1950s and 1960s. Thomas Ahrend's essay – "'Das Wunderland': Tonality and (Political) Topography in Eisler's Songs Around 1950" – considers how tonal music fared as a stylistic choice under the ideological pressures Hanns Eisler encountered upon his remigration to the German Democratic Republic in 1948. Abandoning the *schwebende* (floating) tonality of his earlier works, Eisler's setting of the GDR national anthem ("Auferstanden aus Ruinen") traces a folksong-like tonal simplicity, as if to conform to socialist-realist aesthetic doctrine. The anthem's melodic and harmonic details seem to match utopian images of a new German home. The song "Das Wunderland" (*Neue deutsche Volkslieder*, 1950), meanwhile, positions tonal materials as historically marked artifacts. At once self-reflective and newly strange, tonality for Eisler itself appears as a kind of ruin.

Ullrich Scheideler's chapter, "Tonality in Henze's Music of the 1950s and Early 1960s," explores the composer's reconstruction of his own creative self-image in light of the dogmatic anti-tonal biases of the serial avant-garde at Darmstadt and elsewhere. Henze, in various essays and memoirs, articulates a position for musical tradition as an enduring aesthetic presence, a resource freely available to artists of eclectic sensibility. Exploring the combination of twelve-tone rows with triadic progressions in the early opera *Boulevard Solitude* (1951), Scheideler also considers the sophisticated modal-tonal syntax of the ballet *Undine* (1957). By the time of *Der junge Lord* (1965), Henze's intricate tonal syntax – for Luise's pseudo-Mozartian pianism, e. g. – deploys historical allusions for dramatic ends, as a harsh critique of the opera's empty social order.

Felix Meyer's essay – "'Everything we love belongs to us': George Rochberg's Adoption of Tonality" – underlines the extent to which an embrace of tonality in the 1960s and beyond was still taboo. Rochberg's Third String Quartet (1972), by juxtaposing sound worlds reminiscent of Bartók and late Beethoven, provoked a storm of press criticism for its polystylism. Where the tonality of a collage score could be heard within a fragmented discourse, Rochberg's more sustained idiom was taken as blatant nostalgia. Upon closer inspection, Meyer shows, Rochberg's score reveals subtle exaggerations of Classic-Romantic gestures of registral placement, dy-

namic balance, and harmonic rhythm. Later in his career, Rochberg moved beyond a style-based dichotomy of functional tonality and other idioms, to a harmonic language defined by the opposition of symmetrical and asymmetrical sonorities.

Readers who associate Morton Feldman with his 1950s avant-garde roots might question his credentials as a tonal composer. In Judit Frigyesi's chapter, "The Macro- and Micro-Lives of Sounds in Morton Feldman's *The Viola in My Life I*," however, the experience of pitches – judged in dramatic, emotional, as well as structural terms – commands center-stage. When we face a new pitch, Frigyesi asks, what do we truly experience? In a sustained reading of Feldman's first *Viola* piece (1970), Frigyesi attends to the refined "micro-life" of individual gesture, linking structures to a phenomenology of personal listening. In Feldman's hauntingly still landscape, a single A pitch is "corrected" by, then sinks to, later A♭s; behind an evolving D-minor tonic axis lies a chromatically remote shadow-universe. Single pitches take character roles and don timbral costumes. Feldman described his own scores in strikingly existential terms; pursuing the pitches, Frigyesi unsettles some cherished assumptions about tonal experience, not least music's powers of creating stability or "home."

Processes, Objects, Functions, and Resonances: Directions Since 1970. The balance of the present volume comprises seven case-studies of composers working in six different countries in the past few decades.

Keith Potter, in "Harmonic Progressions as a Gradual Process: Towards an Understanding of the Development of Tonality in the Music of Steve Reich," observes that Reich's "optimistic" 1970 prediction (cited earlier) that clear tonal centers would return to new music was borne out by his own stylistic evolution. A traditional dominant ("V") function is evident already in *Four Organs* (1970); the more recent *Triple Quartet* (1998) documents Reich's increased attention to bass-driven chordal progressions and chromatic extensions of reiterated pitch centers. Charting voice-leading in the first movement, Potter reveals a background cycle of V chords rooted a minor third apart, elaborating an overall E-minor tonality. Parsing pitch-class content, Potter observes a pattern by which each new section omits the central pitches of its predecessor. Reich's sketches convey explicit tonal interests, despite his personal reticence concerning systems ("I'm flying blind"). The varied inspirations for *Triple Quartet* (Bartók's Fourth Quartet, Schnittke's Second) reflect a late-twentieth century hybridity of style, vocabulary, and grammar. Reichian tonality, Potter cautions, harbors crucial ambiguities in relation to earlier tonal musics.

In "Tonality Rediscovered: Oliver Knussen and the Musical 'Object' in the 1970s," Philip Rupprecht examines the British composer's interest in chords as glittering, overtone-rich sound materials, abstracted for aural contemplation. The degree to which Knussen's scores reveal tonal pitch hierarchies to listeners varies. The intricate surface of *Ophelia Dances* (1975) projects a chromatic dichotomy of focal pitches; deep-bass pedals and recurring cadences in *Sonya's Lullaby* (1977) articulate clearer key feeling, with spectralist attention to the materiality of sound objects. Harmonies in *Coursing* (1979) move in cyclic chains of trichords, alluding to traditional V–I progressions while skirting real cadence. In Symphony No. 3, a denser pitch vocabulary admits a proto-cinematic focus on the single chord as a

frozen image, within an overall E major frame. For Knussen (b. 1952), as for many of his generation, tonality offers a linguistic resource fraught with the risk of historical regression, but also an inheritance ripe for rediscovery.

Peter Schmelz, in "Tonality after 'New Tonality': Silvestrov, Schnittke, and Polystylism in the Late USSR," observes the appeal of tonal materials as a stylistic anchor to Soviet composers of the post-Stalin era. Tonality represented the accessibility demanded by socialist-realist aesthetics, giving audiences broader images of selfhood in a society contemplating a mythicized past and an idealized future. For Valentin Silvestrov, by the 1970s, tonality connoted kitsch; in his "post style" works of the 1980s, the tone modulates to an open embrace of nostalgia. Within this "tonal atonality," syntax is stretched, familiar harmonies fade without cadence, and gesture itself becomes oblique or hidden. Alfred Schnittke, moving beyond the brash polystylistic clashes of his earlier works, in the 1980s pursued gradations along a polarity, observing that "atonality can be reached from any point in tonality (and vice versa)."[43] In the Piano Sonata No. 1 (1987), Schmelz shows, chorales are both hallmarks of a glimpsed tonal past and bearers of thwarted hopes.

Eric Drott's chapter, "Saariaho, Timbre, and Tonality," situates a discussion of tonality within the post-serialist scene of Boulez's IRCAM and the spectralist interest in psychoacoustics. When Kaija Saariaho (in a 1987 essay) dubbed tonality an "out-dated" means of organizing pitch structures, she was exploring the cognitive potential for hierarchy in non-pitch parameters. Spectralists in the 1970s, including Grisey, had challenged modernist orthodoxy, and the "drabness" of atonality, by reintegrating consonance and harmonic motion into a musical language couched in acoustic science. For Saariaho, plausible musical hierarchies were to be defined along a continuum of timbres – from pure to noisy – rather than through the traditional pitch-binary of consonance/dissonance. In *Lichtbogen* for ensemble and live electronics (1986), Saariaho regulates timbral transformations by microtonal clouding of distinct tonal objects (the opening mid-register F♯, for example). Tonality here is something akin to a Freudian lost object, never entirely erased but rather the subject of lingering and profound attachment.

In "Projected Resonance: Tonal Dimensions of Microtonal Composition in Music by Georg Friedrich Haas," Simone Heilgendorff charts the Austrian-born composer's pursuit of microtonal resources for composition. Building on Haas's published "theses" concerning microtonality, Heilgendorff draws particular attention to the concept of resonance as an experiential and performative facet of the sound spectrum arising over a given fundamental. For Haas – as for Rihm, among others – the microtonal effects of resonance require their own shaping of musical time and form. Analyzing passages from Haas's Second String Quartet (1998) and the ensemble score *in vain* (2000), Heilgendorff charts the interplay of microtonal and more traditionally tonal intervallic structures. The aural experience of the seventh partial over the Quartet's opening C is hardly dissonant; in later "empty" octave-based chords, Haas's dynamic fluctuations engage the natural variance of the players' sound production with subtly shimmering results. Haas's interest in the

43 Composer's liner note to Schnittke, *Violin Concertos no. 3 and 4*, BIS CD 517 (1991), 4.

volatility of intervallic formations also informs *in vain*: supplementing conventional score notation with precisely performed lighting cues, he further enhances sensory experiences of the sonic.

As Felix Wörner argues in "Tonality as 'Irrationally functional harmony': Thomas Adès's Piano Quintet," the British composer treats tonality not as a preconceived system but rather as a fluctuating phenomenon produced during the listening experience. Tonality, for Adès, is bound up with a "search for stability"; individual pitch events, he asserts, are subject to magnetic forces. The familiar tonal materials in the Piano Quintet (2001) – triads and seventh chords – often allude to tonal centers, only to shift in unexpected directions or into chromatic or atonal realms. If the composer's use of aligned intervallic cycles creates mixed listening expectations, passages of folk-like triadic serenity emerge almost as isolated idylls, impossibly distant. Tonality, for Adès, is not necessarily an integrative structural force or a given; evidence of its presence constantly fluctuates. In motions towards or away from a tonal center, Adès's music favors a constant fading in and out of tonal definition.

In "'Hungarian Tonality'? György Kurtág's … *rappel des oiseaux* … from the Perspective of Albert Simon's Theory of *Tonfelder*," Volker Helbing establishes historical links between Albert Simon's harmonic theories and the work of Hungarian theorists Ernö Lendvai and Lajos Bardós on Bartók's music, originally published in the 1950s and 60s. As contemporaries of Simon at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest in the late 1940s, Kurtág and György Ligeti would have known Lendvai's axis-based Bartók analyses, and Bardós's exploration of diatonic fifth-rows (*Quintreihen*) in chant, folk music, Palestrina, and Liszt. From this perspective, Helbing analyses two later Kurtág scores – *Még egy szó Lendvai Ernöhöz* (from *Játékok* VI, 1997) and … *rappel des oiseaux* … (from *6 Moments musicaux*, 2005) – using the categories of Simon's theory. The intervallic symmetries attending minor- or major-third rooted pitch cycles are central values in both pieces. In the later work, subtitled "*étude pour les harmoniques*," Kurtág seems to reflect on a more distant Rameauian heritage of harmonic possibility, amid his own characteristically layered intervallic sound world.

* * *

The present volume traces its origins to the international conference *Tonality Since 1950* held at the Musikwissenschaftliches Seminar of Basel University in May 2014. On this occasion, most but not all contributors presented earlier versions of their essays. For accepting our invitation to contribute additional essays written exclusively for the book, we are grateful to Thomas Ahrend, Nicole Biamonte, Eric Drott, and Peter Schmelz. The conference was made possible with generous financial support of the Swiss National Science Foundation and the Freie Akademische Gesellschaft Basel. For many kindnesses and assistance with both the conference and the book, we would like to express our gratitude to Annette Ahrend, Edith Auner, Markus Böggemann, Seth Brodsky, Margret Bucher, Marc Givel, Johannes

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Concepts and Contexts

Foundation or Mere Quotation? Conditions for Applying the Tonality Concept to Music After 1950

Ulrich Mosch

Anyone investigating the extent to which "tonality" plays a role in music after 1950, and what that role is, enters a labyrinth of conceptual uncertainties. The term itself is employed to express a variety of somewhat paradoxical meanings, as is immediately obvious from a quick glance at the relevant encyclopedias. Yet "tonality" can also be found beyond the narrow realm of theoretical writings, whether used as a discursive weapon in aesthetic debates, such as those of the 1950s centering on the definition of music,[1] or used, as in the case of Helmut Lachenmann, to describe a certain mode of perception relating to what he calls the "aesthetic apparatus [*ästhetischen Apparat*]."[2] The first question, then, is what is actually under consideration, and an answer is not to be found easily without at least roughly sketching the term as it has previously been used. When referring to some aspects of the complex theory and historical discourse of tonality[3] in the following paragraphs, I do not aim to settle on a fixed and ultimately arbitrary use of historical terminology. Rather, I examine ways in which the term was used historically, to concretize it, and to acknowledge its specific uses as it relates to the subject matter at hand.

The Tonality Concept

What, then, as a working hypothesis, should we understand by the term "tonality"? Two historical variants of the phenomenon form the basis of my consideration: "melodic tonality," which is generated from and can be experienced by melodic progressions; and "harmonic tonality," which develops through the succession of vertical/chordal harmonies – or, as Carl Dahlhaus put it: in contrast to a melodic tonality deriving from "usual types of major and minor melodies," the "notion of *harmonic tonality* places emphasis on the formation of keys through chordal pro-

1 See, for instance, Friedrich Blume, "Was ist Musik?", in *Syntagma musicologicum: Gesammelte Reden und Schriften*, ed. Martin Ruhnke (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1963), 872–86.

2 See Helmut Lachenmann, "Vier Grundbestimmungen des Musikhörens," in *Musik als existentielle Erfahrung: Schriften 1966–1995*, ed. Josef Häusler (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1996), 54–62 (55–56).

3 See Michael Beiche, "Tonalität," in *Terminologie der Musik im 20. Jahrhundert,* ed. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1995), 412–33.

gressions rather than through melodic models."[4] As sequences of events, both variants, obviously, imply the temporal aspect. A discussion of the precise number of elements required for tonality to take shape under specific conditions – such as mere event successions, on the one hand, or melodic/harmonic cadences on the other – is unnecessary; it will suffice here to assert simply *that* we are dealing with a temporal aspect. Without considering temporal progression – which implies at least two or more consecutive elements – we may not speak of tonality. A single chord, strictly speaking, whether consonant or dissonant, cannot be as "tonal" or "atonal" as a single note, despite formulations one sometimes encounters in the scholarly literature. Labeling a note or a chord as tonal thus implies a corresponding context, even if the latter consists of only another single note or chord. This would form a necessary yet unsatisfactory condition for the existence of tonality, for two arbitrary consonant chords – or one consonant and another dissonant chord – can stand side by side without being connected: they do not constitute tonality in and of themselves. Only if the chords are linked to form a relational unity beyond mere adjacency – even an atonal piece might contain "neighbor" chords – in the sense that at least temporarily a common pitch center is defined, may we speak of tonality. The crucial point is that there should be more than just two random sound aggregates in succession. Rather, in order to constitute tonality, each single note of the aggregate must hold a specific position within a hierarchically structured scale or overtone spectrum held in common: each, that is, must relate to a shared pitch center. Not until this condition is met can one speak of tonality. Beyond the temporal aspect as such, then, it is the type of connections between sound aggregates that matters.[5] The basis for my argument is therefore a notion of tonality that emanates from the relatedness of sounds to a given center of local, regional, or global influence.[6]

After all – this, too, is obvious – melodic and harmonic tonal sequences possess an extraordinary power of cohesion. Brian Hyer described this state of affairs in his *New Grove Dictionary* article on "Tonality" as follows:

> [Tonality] gives rise […] to abstract relations that control melodic motion and harmonic succession over long expanses of musical time. In its power to form musical goals and regulate the

4 Carl Dahlhaus, "Tonalität," in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik*, 2nd edition, ed. Ludwig Finscher (Kassel: Bärenreiter 1998), *Sachteil,* 9:626.

5 In a lecture on "Neo-Tonality?" presented during a colloquium on "tonality" held at the 1984 Darmstädter Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, Wolfgang Rihm stated: "Harmonic relations [*die Harmonik*] find […] a form only through the structuring of time. To cry out 'This is tonal!' at the sound of the chord D-F-A is therefore wrong, not only because the chord fails to present a single tonal construct, but above all because this chord can participate in any type of harmony. Only through temporal surroundings is it possible to experience whether it is a tonic or a special case, a foreign body, a mistake, and so on." Wolfgang Rihm, *Ausgesprochen: Schriften und Gespräche*, publications of the Paul Sacher Foundation, vol. 6, ed. Ulrich Mosch (Winterthur: Amadeus 1997), 1:189. Translation mine.

6 See Beiche, "Tonalität," 1.

> progress of the music towards the moments of arrival, tonality has become, in Western cultures, the principal musical means with which to manage expectation and structure desire.[7]

Ultimately this raises the question: why is tonal harmony able to form such large-scale connections in formal contexts? And why do similar processes not occur, with comparable strength, in atonal or serial music?

With the idea of centering there arises immediately – especially with regard to the music since 1950 under consideration – the important question of the range of relevant contexts, in particular concerning the "gravitational forces" of any kind of referential pitch center. That range might be quite limited, or perhaps only local – tonal "islands" in a non-tonal context, for example – or of regional (i. e., sectional) or global scope. Phenomena such as harmonic stability or instability in tonal music are closely bound up with such considerations.

As a contrasting foil to the following examples from the past five decades, I should like to illustrate the last two points with an excerpt from Richard Strauss's *Hymne* op. 34, no. 2. This was written (according to its title) for a mixed choir of sixteen voices,[8] to a poem by Friedrich Rückert. The text is from the collection *Östliche Rosen*, published in 1822. Like other poems in the volume, it was originally untitled, only later acquiring the heading "Gräme Dich nicht!"[9]

The seventh verse of this poem, on the biblical story of Jacob, the lost son, broaches the issue of his errantry. This – together with multilayered fragments from other stanzas – turns out to be the central subject for more than half of the circa fifteen-minute composition. The verse reads:

> Zwar bedenklich ist unser Gang.
>
> Wo wir uns wenden,
> Kein Ziel zu sehen;
> Aber ein jeder Weg, wie lang,
> Muss einst enden,
> O gräme Dich nicht!

Writing in 1897, during a period when he was also composing the tone poems *Don Quixote* (1896–97) and *Ein Heldenleben* (1897–98), Strauss realized the extended path, via a seemingly endless harmonic circuit (starting from m. 98), in which "homecoming" to an F major tonic finally (at m. 182) becomes a real event. The harmonic pathway first leads through the main key's subdominant and dominant and third-related regions. After a half-cadence (mm. 130–32) the path makes a further digression: first, by rising in the circle of fifths as far as E major, then in the opposite direction down to A♭ major, then by way of C major and A major, leading back gradually to the home tonic, via an F pedal that for the first time (in mm. 179–82) is confirmed as tonic with a perfect authentic cadence and then restated until the close. For reasons of space, I reproduce only a short excerpt from this extended

7 Brian Hyer, "Tonality," in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), 23:584.

8 In fact, it is for a mixed double choir of four and twelve voices.

9 See Friedrich Rückert, *Gedichte*, ed. Walter Schmitz (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2005), 105–07. Strauss used only the first seven of a total of ten stanzas.

harmonic "parcours" (see Example 1), specifically the passage immediately before Jacob's path first touches, at least in harmonic terms, on its ultimate goal (F major), without fully arriving there yet. This example illustrates not only the special powers of cohesion of tonal-harmonic materials, but also Strauss's extraordinary play with harmonic instability and stability.

The scope of tonal gravitational forces is bound up with another question to be addressed later on: to speak of tonality, do we need a fixed point of reference, in the form of a center that goes beyond local conditions, upon which the harmonic events depend? Or might degrees of dissonance that shift from chord to chord – degrees of "sonance" (*Sonanzgrade*), as Hermann von Helmholtz might have said – be sufficient to create the phenomenon?

The questions just raised can be directly translated into an analytical directive: when examining the use of tonality in a musical work after 1950 – this also applies more broadly to works of any period – attention should focus on the qualities of the chordal formations themselves, and their respective roles in context. Only the context permits us to determine whether we are dealing with a tonal phenomenon or not. In making the following (ultimately, of course, arbitrary) selection of four examples for more detailed examination, the question of context has been an essential criterion, while the nature of those contexts is, in each case, quite different.

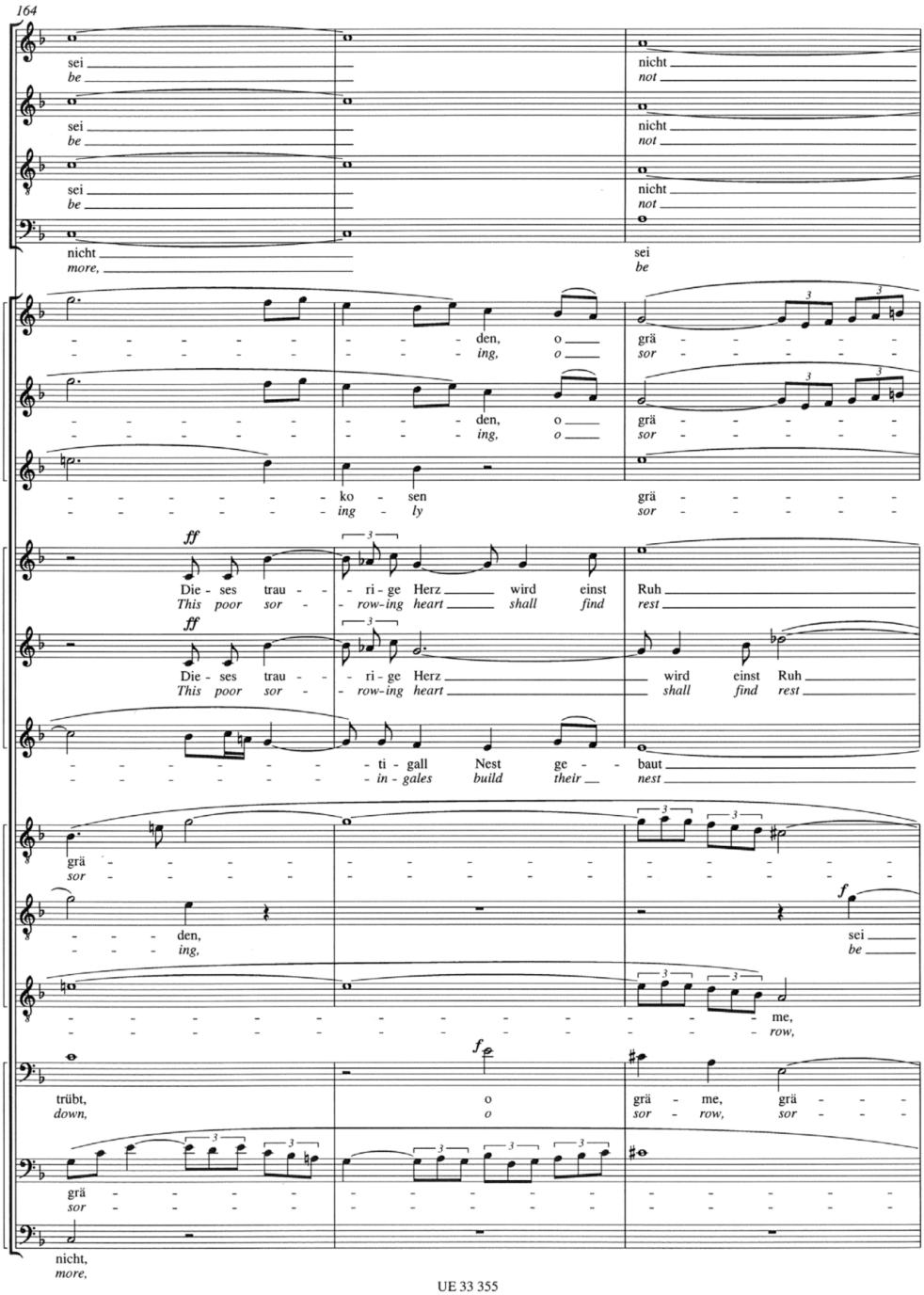
I. Helmut Lachenmann, *Allegro Sostenuto*

Shortly after the opening of the fourteenth section of the *Allegro sostenuto* for clarinet, cello, and piano (1986–88), entitled "Finale solenne" (see Example 2), within a long passage of simultaneities, the composer uses (in m. 386) a major chord extended by a minor seventh, minor ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth: a chord that in a tonal context would immediately be associated with a dominant function. Musically speaking, though, the chord in this passage seems to be an element – neither tonal nor atonal – of a scale of pitch densities ranging from dyads to expansive semitonal clusters. The context suggests that this chord does not assert any harmonic function beyond that of its immediate appearance. Nonetheless, the ear immediately perceives it as something special. Lachenmann's compositional strategy aims, so to speak, at suspending, or at least keeping in check the "instinctive life" – *Triebleben* (Theodor W. Adorno[10]) – of the chord, in order to neutralize its "striving tendencies." This strategy involves isolating the chord – robbing it of its "tonal" context – on the one hand, and then recontextualizing it in order to make it newly available for compositional uses beyond tonal ones.

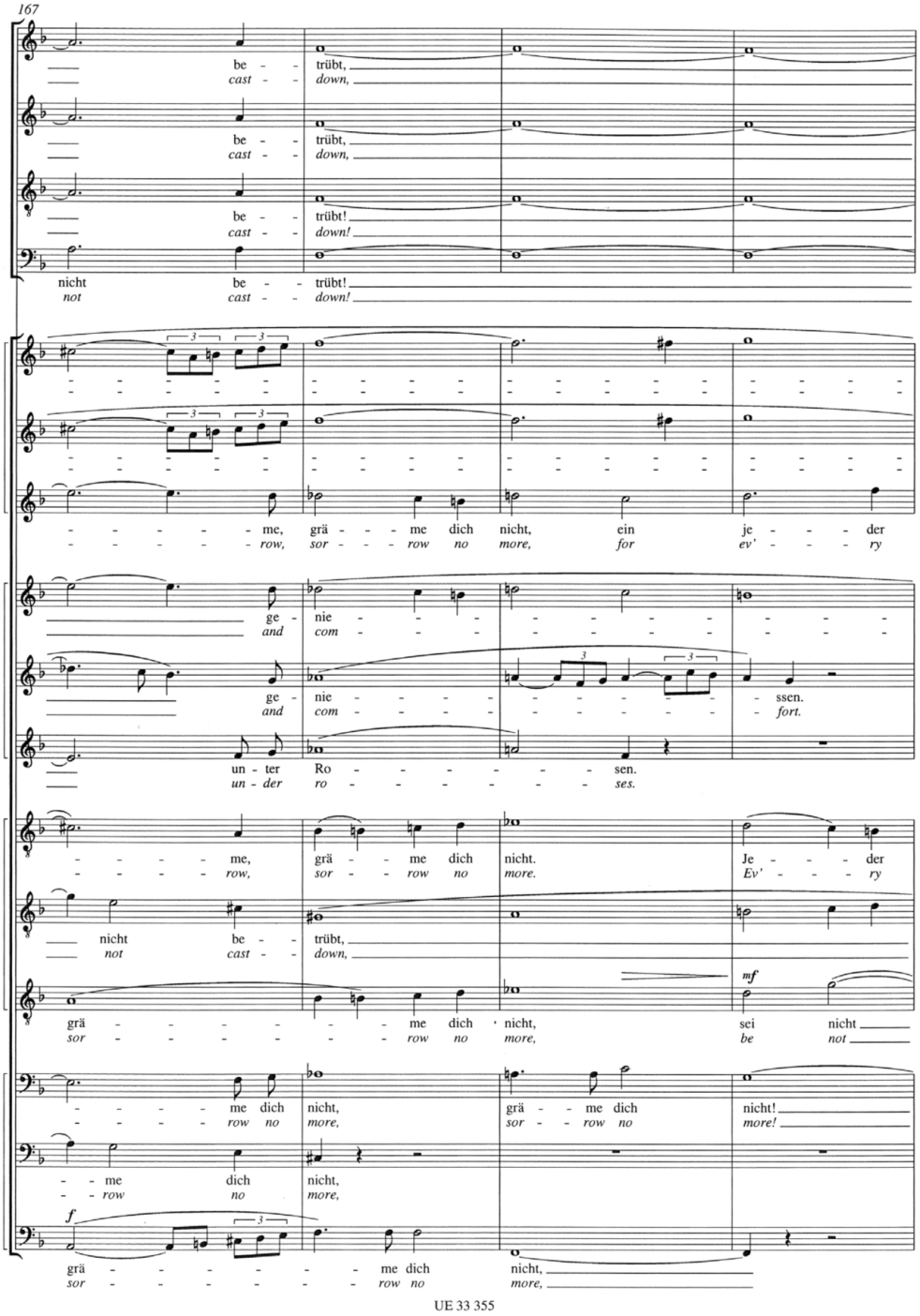
Despite Lachenmann's concern for – as he would put it today – a suspension of tonal "magic,"[11] we almost inevitably associate this chord with the traditional tonal

10 Theodor W. Adorno, "Ernst Kurths 'Musikpsychologie'" (1933), in *Musikalische Schriften VI*, *Gesammelte Schriften* 19, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984), 354.

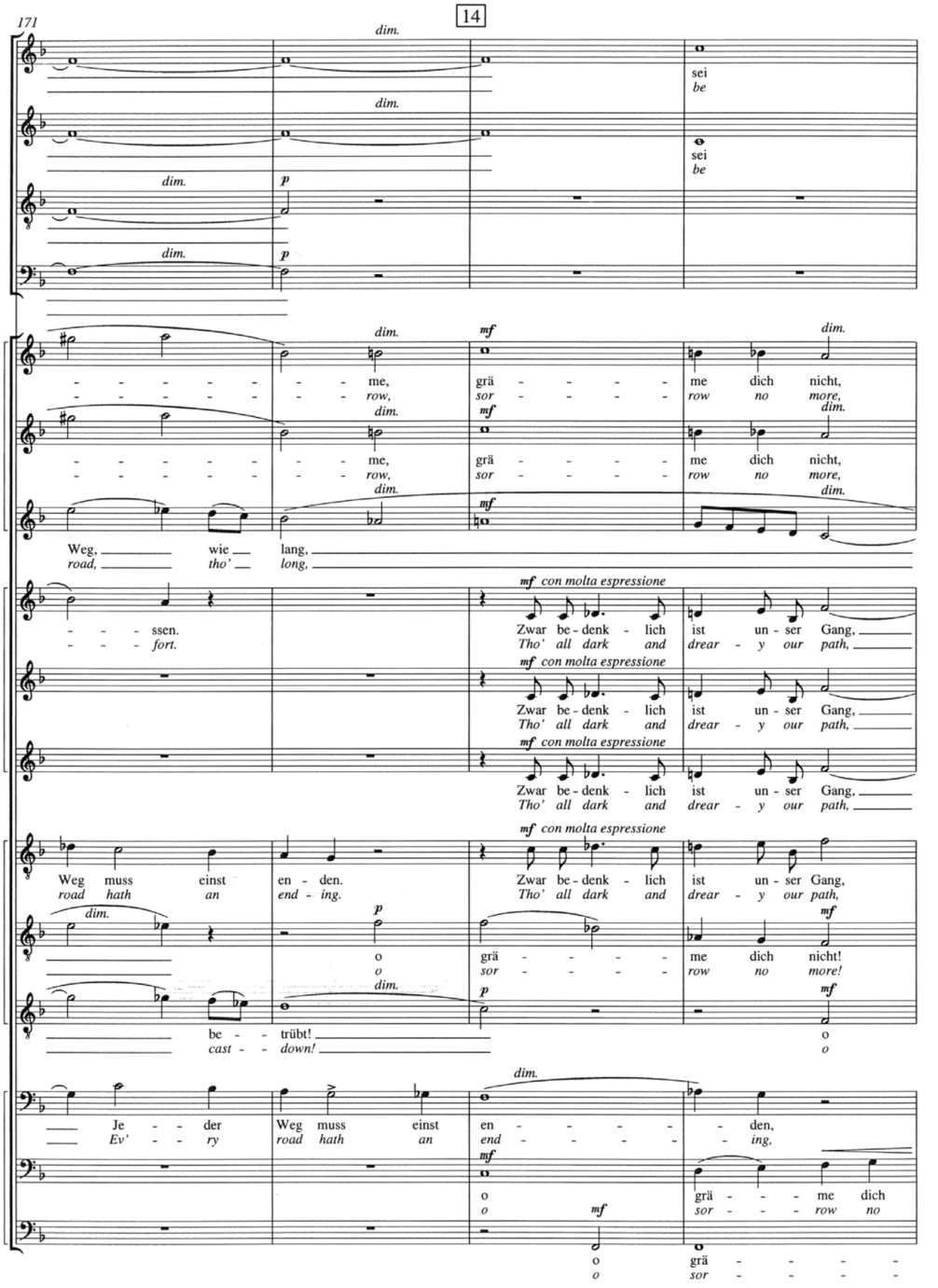
11 See Mosch, "Kunst als vom Geist beherrschte Magie: Zu einem Aspekt von Helmut Lachenmanns Musikbegriff," in *Helmut Lachenmann*, *Musik-Konzepte* (new series) 146, ed. Ulrich Tadday (Munich: Text+Kritik, 2009), 76–96.

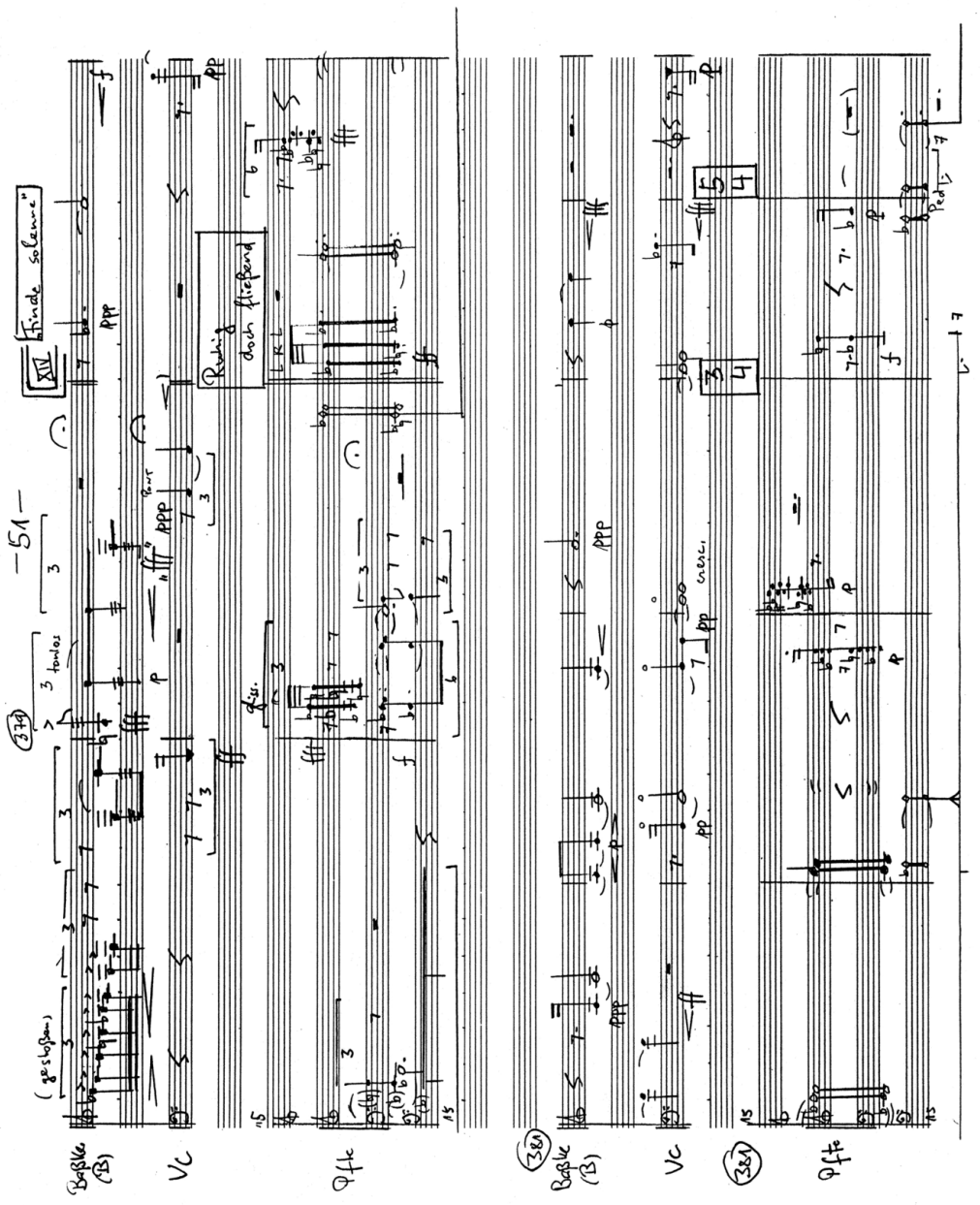


Example 1: Richard Strauss, Hymne *for mixed choir of sixteen voices, op. 34, no. 2, to poetry by Friedrich Rückert (1897): mm. 164–74 (with the kind permission of Universal Edition, Vienna).*



Example 1 cont.


171
14
dim.
sei
be
p
me, grä - - - - me dich nicht,
row, sor - - - - row no more,
mf
Weg, wie lang,
road, tho' long,
- - - ssen. Zwar be - denk - lich ist un - ser Gang,
- - - fort. Tho' all dark and drear - y our path,
mf con molta espressione
Weg muss einst en - den.
road hath an end - ing.
be - trübt!
cast - - down!
o grä - - - - me dich nicht!
o sor - - - - row no more!
Je - - der Weg muss einst en - - - - den,
Ev' - - ry road hath an end - - - - ing,
o grä - - - me dich
o sor - - - row no
o grä - - - -
o sor - - - -



Example 2: Helmut Lachenmann, Allegro sostenuto *for clarinet, violoncello, and piano (1986–88), pp. 51–52 (reproduced with the kind permission of Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden).*